GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4416
ANSWERED ON:25.04.2005
HEALTH HAZARDS DUE TO USE OF MERCURY IN INDUSTRIES
Prabhu Shri Suresh Prabhakar

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any steps have been taken to identify and assess the environmental health hazards posed by emissions of mercury from industries using mercury as one of the raw materials;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a)&(b): Mercury emissions from industries may pose environmental health risk. The measures taken to control mercury emissions include the following:

i) Standards for emissions of mercury firom caustic soda industries, based on mercury cell process, have been notified under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

ii) Commissioning of new plants and expansion of existing mercury cell based caustic soda plants are not allowed.

iii) Hazardous Waste Management Rules have been notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to deal with sludge containing mercury under which generator of the waste is required to take authorization from the respective State Pollution Control Boards.

iv) Guidelines have been evolved on `Criteria for Disposal of Hazardous Waste` which include treatment of mercury bearing brine sludge to the specified standard before disposal to secured landfill.

v) Mercury bearing wastes are prohibited for import and export under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

vi) Mercury emission standards for work-zone environment have been notified Wlder the Factories Act, 1988 including health check up of workers.

vii) Action points under Corporate Responsibility for Environmental Protection (CREP) have been formulated to limit the emissions/discharge of mercury from Chlor-alkali industries and phasing out of plants based on mercury cell process by changing over to membrane cell technology.

(c): Do not arise.